Irade Center Bombing, Release 2003/01/17 WORED FRADE GENTER BOMBING SUSPECTS eek 'Clarity of Motive'

to Ryder employees, had arrived ick up the van in a red GM sedan accompanied by a companion. ler officials said that roughly two rs after the explosion, Salameh eared at the office and claimed van had been stolen the night ore. He asked for his \$400 damdeposit, but was told he must t file a police report.

salameh's name was already in the s files. In 1990 he had demonited publicly on behalf of El-Say-Nosair, an Islamic firebrand who been charged with, and acquitted the 1991 slaying of Jewish Dese League founder Meir Kahane. ameh had visited Nosair at the te prison in Attica, N.Y., where he 3 serving a sentence on lesser rges.

Salameh gave investigators a parilar suspect to consider, and, as portant, drew their attention to a up of activists who orbited ough the larger Islamic commuin New York and New Jersey attended the Abu Bakr mosque Brooklyn and the Al-Salam sque in Jersey City. Rahman had

ached at both mosques.

The FBI had not previously conered these activists to be terror-, merely passionate militants. Yet FBI had access to intelligence rmation about them gathered as result of at least three occurces: the prosecution of Nosair; emergence of Rahman as a prese in the New Jersey-New York amic community; and the 1991 rder of Mustafa Shalabi.

The Nosair trial was a watershed ent among Middle Eastern milits in New York. Kahane, a hero to ny Jewish radicals, was viewed as ymbol of Zionist oppression to Isnic radicals. During the trial, the al groups staged demonstrations, on apposite sides of the court-

ment blames the Islamic Group for a series of bombings and murders. most especially the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

Egyptian security forces are engaged in a massive, nationwide crackdown aimed at fundamentalist militants, including members of the Islamic Group. The government has iailed 700 suspected extremists in response to a wave of violence that has left nearly 150 people dead, at the hands of either police or extremists.

Before he emigrated to the United States, Rahman was acquitted of involvement in Sadat's death, but an FBI intelligence briefing during the Persian Gulf War persuaded at least one senior official to believe that he posed a potentially serious threat from his new base in New Jersey.

When Rahman arrived in the United States. Shalabi found him a residence. Thereafter, they raised funds for the Afghan resistance, but ultimately had a falling out, according to published statements by several associates. In March 1991, Shalabi was found dead in his Brooklyn home, shot and knifed. There have been no arrests.

In addition, five months before the trade center bombing, about 20 members of the two mosques who attended Nosair's trial or visited him at Attica were subpoenaed by a federal grand jury, according to the New York Times. Ahmed A. Satta, a postal worker, told the Times that FBI agents grilled him about Nosair, Shalabi and Rahman.

To officials, then, the circumstantial clues being gathered by agents in New Jersey seemed to fit into a larger context. For example ved Tor Release 2003/11/14 and thraham "New York state driver's license listed Storage facility employees told the New York state driver's license listed his residence as 57 Prospect Park, S W Brooklyn—the home of Ibrahim

ix suspects have been charged in connection with the World Trade Center bombing. Four were jointly indicted in the bombing and remain in custody. One is being held on obstruction charges and the sixth reportedly has fled the country.

MOHAMMAD SALAMEH, 25 Jordanian. Jersey City, N.J., handyman arrested March 4. Indicted in the

bombing.



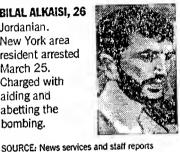
NIDAL AYYAD, 25 Kuwaiti. Maplewood, N.J., chemical engineer arrested March 10. indicted in the bombing.



MAHMUD **ABOUHALIMA, 33** Egyptian. Woodbridge, N.J., cab driver arrested in Egypt and brought to the U.S. March 24, Indicted in the bombing.



BILAL ALKAISI, 26 Jordanian. New York area resident arrested March 25. Charged with aiding and abetting the bombing.



IBRAHIM **ELGABROWNY, 42** Held Iraqi passport, Brooklyn contractor arrested March 4. Charged with obstruction and possessing fraudulent passports.



RAMZI AHMED YOUSEF, 25 Jersey City, N.J., resident who reportedly fled the country. Indicted in the bombing.



-Compiled by Barbara J. Saffir

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office, agents arrested him. In his pockets, they found the business card of Nidal Ayyad, 25, a chemical engineer.

Eventually, the FBI executed at least 10 search warrants in New Jersey.

Agents found evidence connecting Salameh to a rental unit at the Space Station Storage facility in Jersey City. Employees identified Salameh as the man who rented a shed in November under the name "Kamal Ibra-

Upon searching this unit March 5, agents discovered several hundred pounds of chemicals that, if properly combined and triggered with a small explosive, could produce a powerful blast. They also discovered that the chemicals-hundreds of pounds of urea and nitric acid-were purchased

FBI that the day before the bombing they saw a man they believe was

that Salameh and Ayyad had a joint account at a local bank. They discovered that on Feb. 15 Ayyad had rented from National Car Rental the same type of car that Salameh arrived in at the Ryder van rental office. Moreover, "Salameh" was listed as an additional driver on the rental car. A witness from the Ryder office identified Avvad as the same man who accompanied Salameh when he rented the van.

Ayyad's office phone. Agents learned

On March 10 agents descended on Avyad's first-floor apartment at 60 Boyden Ave., Maplewood, N.J. Inside, they found what a prosecutor later described as a modified timing mechanism that an explosives expert described as a time delay firing system. Avvad was carrying an American Express card in the name of Bilal Alkiasi At least one witness told the 67891003900260005-FBI that a man hamed Alkiasi accompanied Salameh to the storage shed

"on several occasions."

purported involvement with the Afghan resistance. Associates said Abouhalima traveled to Pakistan for military training and that he was a follower of Rahman and sometimes served as his driver. Rahman has disputed this claim and publicly denounced the bombing.)

Aside from these characterizations of Abouhalima-which will likely be contested in court—there has been no public disclosure of what direct evidence, if any, connects him to the bombing. He was eventually returned to New York, U.S. officials have refused to discuss their knowledge of the arrest or treatment of Abouhalima.

For weeks, the trade center bombing was an incomplete act of terrors ism because it lacked a political mest sage. But on March 28 the New York Times published a letter it received four days after the bombing. The Times quoted a law enforcement source who said there was "incontro-